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U.S. Department of the Interior

Headquarters

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Historical Park and  
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## Chalmette Battlefield Task Force Minutes

### Meeting Minutes

*Date of Meeting*    *October 22, 2003 at 4:00 p.m.*  
*Location:*        *St. Bernard Government Complex*  
                         *Council Chambers Meeting Room*  
                         *8245 W. Judge Perez Drive*  
                         *Chalmette, Louisiana 70043*

#### *Task Force Members Present:*

Cpt. Bonnie Pepper-Cook  
Mr. Anthony Fernandez, Jr.  
Mr. Alvin W. Guillot  
Mrs. Elizabeth McDougall, Chairperson  
Ms. Faith Moran  
Col. John F. Pugh, Jr.  
Supt. Geraldine Smith  
Mr. Tim Bemisderfer, Federal Designated Officer for Regional Director  
Southeast Regional Office

#### *Task Force Members Absent:*

Louisiana State Historic Preservation Representative (vacant)  
Mr. Eric Cager  
Mrs. George W. Davis  
Mr. Drew Heaphy  
Mr. Paul Perez

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*Next Meeting:*        *Tuesday, December 16, 2003 at 3:00 p.m.*  
                         *Location – St. Bernard Government Complex*  
                         *Council Chambers Meeting Room*  
                         *8245 W. Judge Perez Drive*  
                         *Chalmette, Louisiana 70043*

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The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Elizabeth McDougall at the St. Bernard Government Complex. The 7/30/03 meeting minutes were presented for approval. B. Cook motioned to accept the minutes, A. Guillot seconded, and the minutes were accepted. The Chair asked for an update from Mr. Tim Bemisderfer, the Designated Federal Officer.

### Recap on the Site Visits I & II

T. Bemisderfer thought the site visits conducted during the two previous meetings were extremely productive and thanked each member for sharing their views and ideas about the battlefield and cemetery. He complimented members for offering suggestions in an open and understanding manner and for their continued dedication to this important work. He mentioned that they had provided an invaluable perspective on the issues and concerns of local park stakeholders to park management and the General Management Plan Amendment (GMP) / Development Concept Plan (DCP) planning team. He shared a written summary (NPS Project Agreement) of observations by the planning team and noted that the project agreement also included an overview of the strategy to be used by the planning team to accomplish the GMP/DCP.

T. Bemisderfer continued with a recap of a variety of issues, many of which involve how people move through the site and what they do while they are there. For example, issues regarding the necessity of the Loop Road and how visitors transition from the cemetery to the battlefield were noted. A new visitor center was discussed with consideration given to making the interpretive environment more hospitable to elderly and school age visitors. Maintenance issues and how to better accommodate park visitors after 5:00 pm were discussed. Also noted were concerns about making the park entrance more attractive and identifying an appropriate way to integrate the Malus-Beauregard House into the park program. Acquisition of additional property was discussed. The current Task Force charter limits discussion to existing property. Chalmette legislation states any additional property can only be purchased and managed with donated money. Additional property would be difficult to pursue without a change in the legislation. It is still worthy of further exploration under the GMP.

T. Bemisderfer suggested that alternatives considered in the plan may be visionary but cautioned that they must also be realistic about cost. It will be important to phase all future development proposals so that critical elements can be in place for the 2015 Celebration. E. McDougall mentioned that transportation to the park from New Orleans needs to be considered. B. Pepper-Cook asked for clarification on whether the National Park Service could provide transportation. She suggested arranging transportation for particular events could be prove to be useful. T. Bemisderfer suggested they might consider including this idea in their final Task Force recommendations.

### Another Related Issue to the Task Force

T. Bemisderfer moved the discussion to future tasks. The Task Force Charter expires on August 19, 2004 and the members need to consider how they would like to record their observations and recommendations. When questioned on who would be the official audience for this document, T. Bemisderfer agreed to determine the answer and report back to the members at the December meeting. D. Muth reminded the members that the NPS and Congressional Delegation will receive the most benefit from their recommendations regardless of how widely the final report is circulated. T. Bemisderfer acknowledged again how much the task force members' input has benefited the planning team's understanding of the site and encouraged everyone to remain involved in the GMP/DCP as individual citizens after the charter expires in August, 2004.

### Other Ongoing Planning Efforts for the Chalmette Battlefield and National Cemetery

T. Bemisderfer transitioned the discussion to familiarize the Task Force members with other ongoing planning activities supporting the Chalmette Battlefield and National Cemetery

GMP/DCP. These planning activities were documented in two handouts he shared with the membership: the Project Agreement distributed earlier and an outline of suggested milestones through Summer 2004. Revised handouts are included with these minutes for the benefit of those who could not attend the meeting. The handouts are working planning documents.

T. Bemisderfer described two phases of the planning process: internal scoping and public scoping. Internal scoping is essentially a planning term used to describe information gathering activities focused on NPS sources and, in this case, with the Task Force. Public scoping is information gathering from all other public and private sources. T. Bemisderfer then referred to the second handout, which proposed a schedule for beginning the public scoping phase. He suggested public scoping meetings could begin in January with a series of open house and roundtable discussion meetings. A public workshop to develop possible alternative proposals could also be scheduled later in the spring.

After the public alternatives development workshop, the planning team will consider all the different ideas it has gathered over the past year and create a range of draft alternatives. The draft alternatives will be further clarified at the April Task Force meeting. If all goes well, the alternatives will be ready for public comment in May. Information about the draft alternatives will be shared through a newsletter and via the park website. A public meeting will be scheduled in June to provide all stakeholders with an opportunity to get clarifications, ask questions and provide additional comments about our ideas.

Public comments and concerns about the draft alternatives will be analyzed, adjustments made to the alternatives if necessary, and a draft plan prepared. The draft plan will include a "preferred alternative" and provide supporting data and other information to help park stakeholders understand the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative and how the preferred was identified. Public meetings will be scheduled to allow all park stakeholders an opportunity to comment and provide additional thoughts for consideration.

Public comments about the draft plan will be analyzed, adjustments made to the alternatives if necessary, and a final plan prepared. A last public meeting will be scheduled if park stakeholders feel they need more opportunity to comment on the final plan.

B. Cook suggested an invitation to Sen. Landrieu and Rep. Tauzin might be appropriate for the public presentations. T. Bemisderfer agreed and said other invitations may also be appropriate. In fact, he said it might also be good to invite some of their internal staff to attend an open forum session during the scoping phase.

T. Bemisderfer asked the members if the proposed schedule as shown on the Milestones handout sounded reasonable. He requested members review the handouts and let Chairperson McDougall know if they have any comments. Comments can be sent to her via email or telephone call. The Task Force members suggested the Public Open House meetings begin the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> week of January and the Alternative Development Workshop begin in early March.

#### Task Force Meetings

Meetings must be identified in the Federal Register before a meeting can be held. A discussion ensued about ways to ease the administrative burden of scheduling future Task Force meetings.

The lead-time for a meeting announcement in the Federal Register is 30-45 days. It was suggested a brief meeting agenda be agreed upon at the current meeting and then listed with the announcement to help interested parties identify the register notice. For example, the Task Force November meeting now must be postponed to December because the November meeting notice does not have enough lead time for publishing in the Federal Register prior to the meeting.

The Task Force members discussed and agreed on a range of possible dates (December 15, 16, or 18) for the next meeting. T. Bemisderfer and Chairperson McDougall agreed to identify a mutually agreeable date and finalize a December meeting date as quickly as possible. (Subsequently, Task Force members were polled and the meeting was scheduled for December 16, 2003 from 3-5 pm).

T. Bemisderfer moved the discussions to the Round Table discussions for GMP planning listed on his milestone schedule and suggested several discussion groups that could be considered including federal, state, and local agencies, former Fazendeville residents, the port authority, the railroad company, St. Bernard Parish Chamber, local business interests, history and historic preservation groups, etc. Task Force members are asked to report back at the December meeting with suggestions.

T. Bemisderfer will also work on a newsletter to send out describing the planing process and announcing the public open houses and alternative workshops. D. Muth will assist by compiling names and addresses on a mailing list.

Chairperson McDougall asked for suggestions on how to encourage public scoping meeting attendance. Advertising will be necessary to make the public aware of the meeting. It will also be necessary to schedule specific groups for specific meetings to prevent the distraction of too many groups. T. Bemisderfer suggested having meetings at various times such as in the afternoon at the park and in the evenings in town.

To wrap up the discussion on future meetings, the members agreed the Agenda items for the December meeting should include Old Business, the Budget Review, Planning the Open House and Roundtable meetings, and a discussion of park Mission, Purpose and Significance.

Chairperson McDougall mentioned the resignation of the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) representative, M. Fraering. She anticipates a new SHPO representative will be at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned. The next meeting date is set for December 16, 2003 at 3:00 p.m. at the St. Bernard Government Complex.

Elizabeth McDougall 3-23-04 Timothy R. Bemis 3-24-04  
Mrs. Elizabeth McDougall, Chairperson Date Mr. Tim Bemisderfer, Federal Designated Officer Date

Note: A quorum was not in attendance for the December 16, 2003 meeting. Elizabeth McDougall committee chairperson selected March 3, 2004 as the next meeting date. The October 22, 2003 minutes were approved by committee vote at the March 3, 2004 meeting. The Task Force minutes will be posted on the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve web site  
<http://www.nps.gov/jela>